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Daß gleich die erste Predigt im Advent für die ganze kommende herrliche Festzeit von durchgreifender Bedeutung und Wichtigkeit ist, dessen ist sich wohl der im Amte geübte Prediger von vornherein bewußt. Diese hohe Wichtigkeit ergibt sich aus der Lage der Dinge. Nach den vielen Trinitatissonntagen, in denen sich unser göttlicher Heiland in seiner erlösenden Gnadenherrlichkeit so allseitig offenbart, sehnt sich jeder gläubige Christ, der sich nun einmal an den Gang und Verlauf des christlichen Kirchenjahrs gewöhnt hat, ganz naturgemäß danach, wieder zur Heilsquelle zurückzukehren und Christi ewig köstliche Gnaden thaten zur Rettung der sündigenden Menschenvelt, und gerade auch sein Kommen ins Fleisch, aufs neue unter dem Gnadenbeistand des Heiligen Geistes an der Hand tief durchdachter Predigten zu betrachten. Diese Spannung ist vom Prediger recht auszunützen. Sein Zeugnis von dem Lamm Gottes, das der Welt Sünde trägt, von der Notwendigkeit seines Kommens, der Herrlichkeit des von ihm bewirkten Heils, der Allgemeinheit dieses Heils und der unbeschreibbaren Wichtigkeit gläubiger Hinnahme dieses von Gott allen Sündern zugedachten Heils muß immer aufs neue von dem evangelischen Prediger frisch und lebendig, ergreifend und packend der andächtigen Gemeinde vorgetragen werden. Wenn je ein christlicher Prediger mit brünstigem Flehen die Kanzel besteigt, so geschieht es zum Beginn der Adventszeit; denn hier ist ihm wahrlich Gelegenheit geboten, das köstliche Evangelium von Christo, dem Sündheiland, in die Herzen seiner Zuhörer tief hineinzupredigen. Eben so wenig aber wie die Adventspredigt verflachen darf, darf sie auch auf eine überschwengliche Gefühlseligkeit abzielen; sie muß erbauen, indem sie die Zuhörer aus Gottes Wort recht unterrichtet. Dazu eignet sich der gewählte Text vortrefflich, denn er faßt alle Stücke, die zu einer guten Adventspredigt gehören, aufs klarste zusammen, malt den Erlöser in seiner ganzen Heilandsliebe vor Augen, warnt gegen pharisäischen Herzensstolz, der den gering erscheinenden Erretter verachtet, und for-

bert alle Ringenden, Lasttragenden und Abgearbeiteten auf, die gesuchte Seelenruhe bei Jesu zu finden. Der Schriftabschnitt läßt sich nach seinen zwei Hauptgedanken, die in enger Beziehung zueinander stehen, einteilen in: 1. Jesu Jubelruf, V. 25—27, 2. Jesu Heilandsruf, V. 28—30. Nözgen (im Strack-Zöckler'schen Kommentar) hat den Abschnitt betitelt: „Jesu Gnadenruf an alle Empfänglichen.“ Ein sehr geeigneter Titel wäre: „Jesu große Freude über die Rettung armer Sünder.“ Im Zentrum der ganzen Textgedanken steht Jesu erbarmende Sünderliebe.

Wichtig ist für das Verständnis des Textes, daß man sich von vornherein bewußt wird, wie dieser Abschnitt in den Zusammenhang der im ganzen Kapitel dargelegten Gedanken hineinpäßt. Unmittelbar vorher geht die Drohrede wider die galiläischen Städte, Kap. 11, 20—24, „in welchen am meisten seiner Taten geschehen waren und hatten sich doch nicht gebessert“. Diese gewaltige Bornesrede folgte auf Jesu Klage über das ungläubige Volk, das sowohl das Zeugnis des Täufers wie sein eigenes mit Spott und Hohn beantwortete. Anlaß hierzu bot die Belehrung über Johannes, dessen an Jesum gerichtete Frage: „Wist du, der da kommen soll, oder sollen wir eines andern warten?“ ihn bewog, die verkehrten Volksmeinungen über den Täufer zurechtzustellen, V. 2—15. In den in dem Kapitel angeführten Reden Jesu wird ein Doppeltes betont: 1. die ganz unerhörte Verachtung des dem Volke angebotenen Heils; 2. ein wahrer Heißhunger nach dem Seelenheil des von Johannes und Jesu verkündigten Himmelreiches. „Aber von den Tagen Johannis des Täufers bis hieher leidet das Himmelreich Gewalt; und die Gewalt tun, die reißen es zu sich“, V. 12. Unser Abschnitt ist daher die Klimax des Ganzen, und sowohl Jesu Jubelruf wie sein Gnadenruf erklärt sich aus dem vorhergehenden Kontext. Bedingt sind diese durch den Kontrast zwischen den ungläubigen Verächtern der Gnade und den bußfertigen Sündern, die sich zu Jesu hindrängten, um von ihm zu lernen, wie sie Ruhe für ihre Seelen finden könnten. Nur wenn dies im Auge behalten wird, bleibt man vor dem calvinistischen Mißverständnis des Jubelrufes Jesu bewahrt.

V. 25. „Zu jener Zeit antwortete Jesus und sprach: Ich bringe dir, Vater, Herr Himmels und der Erde, Preis dar, weil du dieses vor Weisen und Verständigen verborgen und es Einfältigen geoffenbart hast.“ (Übersetzung von E. F. Nözgen.) Mit den Worten *ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ* wird die Zeit dieses Jubelrufes genau eingeführt. In derselben Stunde (*ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ*, Lukas), da es Jesu bewußt wurde, daß die große Mehrheit des Volkes das Evangelium abtwies, pries Jesus seinen Vater. Lukas (10, 17—21) verbindet den Jubelruf Jesu mit der Rückkehr der Siebzig. Beide Zeitbestimmungen lassen sich wohl miteinander vereinigen, und die Ansicht moderner Exegeten, daß Jesus

diese Rede überhaupt nie getan hat, ist rein aus der Luft gegriffen. Diese Rede gehört in die Zeit, da JESU galiläisches Wirken seinem Abschluß entgegenschah, eine Zeit, da sich die Verstockung der großen Volksmenge bereits vollzogen hatte. Das Verbum ἀποκρίνομαι (ἀποκριθεῖς) steht hier nicht in seiner gewöhnlichen Bedeutung von „antworten“, sondern entspricht dem hebräischen נָצַח, „auf eine bestimmte Veranlassung das Wort ergreifen“. Die Verstockung des Volks, die bei allem Erfolg sich auch bei der Predigt der Siebzig und der Zwölf zeigte, bewog JESUS, diesen Jubelruf, der nicht als ein einsames Gebet oder als Monolog zu fassen ist, sondern im Kreise vieler Zuhörer geschah, zu tun. Der Jubelruf selbst ist eine Lobpreisung Gottes des Vaters, des HERRN Himmels und der Erde. Wie auch sonst, so nennt hier Christus Gott seinen Vater, weil er sich ihm gegenüber als Sohn weiß, wie er denn auch fort und fort seine Gottessohnschaft betonte. Als Vater aber handelte Gott auch, indem er alle, die Christo im Glauben nachfolgten, als Kinder annahm, Matth. 5, 9; Luk. 6, 35; Joh. 1, 12. In dieser doppelten Beziehung ist daher der Name hier sehr passend; ebenso auch die andere Bezeichnung: „HERR Himmels und der Erde.“ Das Tun des Vaters, das JESUM zum Lobpreis stimmt, ist ein Tun des weltregierenden Gottes. In seinem Verstockungsgericht über die Verächter des Heils offenbart sich Gott als der Allwaltende. Aber wichtig ist, daß vor dem κύριος das Wort πατήρ steht: der Gott der absoluten Herrschaft ist der Gott der Liebe, und nur die Verachtung dieser Liebe führt das Gericht der Verstockung nach sich. Den Gott der Liebe, aber auch des Gerichts preist, ἐξομολογοῦμαι, JESUS. Mit dem Dativ wird dieses Verbum im Sinne von ἡ ἡγή, Gen. 29, 35 (s. LXX), gebraucht und bedeutet so viel als: anerkennend bekennen, preisen, Preis darbringen. Diesen Preis bringt JESUS aus einem zweifachen Grunde dar (das εἰ ist nicht mit „daß“, sondern mit „weil“ zu übersetzen, eben weil es den Grund einführt), nämlich weil Gott ταῦτα vor Weisen und Verständigen verborgen und es den Einfältigen geoffenbart hat. Das ταῦτα beziehen wir am besten auf das Geheimnis des Himmelreichs, Matth. 13, 11, den Inhalt des von JESU und seinen Jüngern verkündigten Evangeliums. Die Verstockten in Israel erkannten nichts von JESU göttlicher Würde, seiner messianischen Sendung, seiner Gottessohnschaft und seinem zu vollbringenden Erlösungswerk. Das schreibt JESUS Gott zu; er hat es ihnen verborgen, während er es den Unmündigen offenbarte. Die Aoriste der beiden koordinierten Verben bezeichnen dies Handeln Gottes als ein vergangenes Handeln. Die Verstockung ist ein Gericht Gottes, die Selbstoffenbarung ein Akt der Gnade. Die Annahme aber einer absoluten Wahl nach calvinistischer Auffassung verbietet der Text selbst sowie der Kontext. Die Verstockten bezeichnet JESUS als „Weise“ und „Verständige“, womit er andeutet, warum es zu keiner Offenbarung Gottes bei ihnen kommen konnte. Beide Worte stehen in einem tadelnden Sinn und bezeichnen

vor allem die Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer, die in ihrer und des Volkes Meinung „weise“ und „klug“ waren; vgl. Joh. 9, 40. 41. Zu diesen „Weisen“ und „Verständigen“ gehörte aber auch das weltkluge, ungläubige Volk, das sich in der Zurückweisung des Evangeliums für weise hielt. Beiden Klassen wurde dasselbe Evangelium gepredigt und zu demselben Zweck; aber während die „Einfältigen“, eigentlich die **ἁπλοῖ**, die in der jüdischen Weisheit Unbewanderten, hier die gläubigen Anhänger Christi überhaupt, die von den Pharisäern mißachtet, gehaßt und als Narren verspottet wurden (vgl. Joh. 7, 46—52), aus Gnaden das Wort Jesu annahmen und dadurch erleuchtet wurden, wiesen es die Selbstklugen ab und blieben daher in ihrer Blindheit. Vgl. zur Sache 1 Kor. 1, 19—31; Eph. 3, 3—6. Auch der Kontext bezeugt die Schuld derer, die nicht zur Erkenntnis kamen; denn nicht nur predigte ihnen Jesus allen Ernstes und unermüdlich überhaupt, sondern sein Gnadenruf erging auch an die, die sein Wort mit Füßen traten. Christus preist seinen himmlischen Vater wegen des Gelingens seines Rats und Willens, denn an den einen offenbarte er die Überschwenglichkeit seiner Gnade, an den andern aber die Größe seiner Macht als allwaltender Gott. Luther bemerkt hierzu: „Als wollte er sagen: Fort mit diesen traurigen Schauspielen des göttlichen Zorns, und fort mit denen, die nicht hören und glauben wollen! Was soll ich mich vergeblich mit ihrer Bosheit quälen? Ich bin vielmehr fröhlich in dir, o Vater, der du diese Hoffärtigen und die in ihren Augen weise sind, deiner Wahrheit auch nicht einmal würdigt. Ich preise dich, daß du diejenigen, die dich nicht wollen und alles besser wissen wollen, wiederum nicht willst und nichts achtest und sie in ihrer Weisheit nicht billigt oder bewunderst, sondern sie wiederum verachtest und an ihrer Statt erwählst die Törichten und Einfältigen, daß du es ihnen offenbaren mögest.“ (VII, 130 f.)

V. 26: „Fürwahr, Vater, weil es so vor dir wohlgefällig ward!“ Triphche, Meyer und einige andere Ausleger wollen auch dieses *οὕτως* mit „daß“ übersetzt haben; doch ist die von de Wette und andern vorgeschlagene Übersetzung „weil“ auch hier vorzuziehen; denn dieser Satz enthält die Auflösung der scheinbaren Paradoxie im vorigen Satz. Die Verwerfung der Ungläubigen und die Seligmachung der Gläubigen hat seinen Grund in dem Wohlgefallen, *eudokia*, des Vaters. Wir sehen daher am besten in diesem Vers eine Wiederholung und Bestätigung des Dankpreises. So, *οὕτως*, und nicht anders, wurde vollzogen, *ἐγένετο*, was vor Gott wohlgefällig, in seinem Willen beschlossen war; vgl. Matth. 18, 14. Zu *eudokia* vgl. Kap. 3, 17; Luk. 2, 14. Zahn: „Nicht ein beklagenswertes Mißgeschick ist es, daß die Heilswahrheit vor Weisen verborgen bleibt und Unmündigen sich enthüllt, sondern Gott hat das bewirkt, ja sein Willensentschluß ist es, der sich hierin verwirklicht.“ Luther: „Das ist wohlgefällig vor dir, diese, die da hoffärtig sind in ihrer Gerechtigkeit und Weisheit, zu verwerfen und wiederum die zu erwählen, welche in ihren Sünden und in ihrer Torheit Toren sind.“

Ja, Vater, du bist wahrhaftig ein gerechter Gott, der die Hoffärtigen und Sicherer haßt und die Niedrigen und Elenden liebt. Das mag ein Gott heißen! So machen es nicht die andern Götter oder Menschen, sondern allein vor dir gilt dieses Urteil.“ (VII, 131.)

B. 27: „Alles ward mir von meinem Vater übergeben, und niemand erkennet den Sohn als nur der Vater, noch erkennt jemand den Vater, wenn nicht der Sohn und der, welchem der Sohn es offenbaren will.“ Den Satz: „Alles ward mir von meinem Vater übergeben“ beziehen wir am besten auf alles, was zur Ausführung des in Rede stehenden göttlichen Heilsratschlusses zur Verwirklichung seines Reiches dient. Damit ist eingeschlossen, daß der Vater dem Sohn schon im Stande der Niedrigkeit alle Dinge überhaupt übergeben hat. Hier handelt es sich aber im besonderen um die Geheimnisse des Gottesreiches, die Gott seinem Sohn anvertraut hat, und welche dieser allen offenbart, wie er will. Stöckhardt: „Wer den Vater und den Sohn und den ewigen Rat Gottes, daß der Vater seinen Sohn in die Welt gesandt hat zum Heil der Welt, recht erkannt hat, dem ist das von Gott gegeben.“ (Bibl. Gesch., S. 113.) Von Natur kann kein Mensch Gott erkennen; will er Gott erkennen, so muß er an Christum glauben und von ihm solches Erkennen hinnehmen. Zahn: „Wie Jesus hier den, welchen er eben seinen Vater genannt hat, im zweiten und dritten Satz den Vater schlechthin nennt, . . . so nennt er sich dreimal den Sohn schlechthin, um sich als den einzigen zu bezeichnen, der im vollen Sinn dieses Namens zu Gott im Verhältnis des Sohnes zum Vater steht. Darauf beruht es, daß er der einzige Mensch ist, welcher eine wirkliche Erkenntnis Gottes besitzt, und daß alle, denen eine solche zuteil werden soll, sie nur von Jesu empfangen können, und daß es von dem Willen Jesu abhängt, wem er sie mitteilen will.“ Der Wille Jesu hat daher nach B. 25 f. auch den gleichen Inhalt wie der Ratschluß und das Handeln Gottes. Luther: „Das ist so viel gesagt: Derjenige Rat und Wille Gottes, daß er die Welt wolte selig machen durch den Sohn, der ins Fleisch gekommen ist und gelitten hat, und daß durch den Glauben an ihn alle bei Gott in Gnaden seien usw., und daß der Sohn mit dem Vater hierin gleichen Sinnes sei in der Gottheit, das ist das Geheimnis, das den Weisen und Klugen verborgen ist. Und zwar, spricht er, ist es so verborgen, daß es unmöglich sei, dieses zu erkennen, wo es nicht der Sohn offenbare. Das heißt: Alle müssen zum Dienst meines Wortes Schüler werden und von mir, nach dem Hören und unter dem Hören des Wortes, den Geist empfangen; es wird weder Gesetz noch Gerechtigkeit noch Weisheit, oder was es auch sein möge, irgend etwas nützen. Ich bin's gar, und außer mir ist alles nichts. Deswegen muß man entweder mich hören, der ich es offenbare, oder es ist um alle Menschen geschehen, soviel die ewige Seligkeit anbetrifft.“ (VII, 135.) Aus dieser Aussage ergibt sich die Aufforderung im folgenden Vers.

B. 28: „Hierher zu mir alle, die ihr euch abmüht und belastet seid,

und ich werde euch erquicken.“ Nachdem Jesus dargelegt hat, daß nur durch ihn der Vater und sein Heil zu erkennen ist, fordert er alle Sünder auf, zu ihm zu kommen. Die *κοπιῶντες* und *πεφορτισμένοι* sind alle, die unter der Last des Gesetzes, und namentlich der pharisäischen Satzungen, sich abmühen. Bei dem ersten Verbum waltet der Begriff des Arbeitens und Ringens über den des Ermüdens und Ermattens vor. Unter dem Joch des Gesetzes arbeiten sie sich ab und beladen sich mit einer Last, die ihre Kraft übersteigt, vgl. Jes. 28, 12; 50, 4; aber nur bei Jesu finden sie die Erquickung, die ihnen so nötig ist und die sie im Gesetz vergeblich suchen. Die Ausdrücke bezeichnen die Last teils als eine selbst übernommene, teils als eine aufgebürdete; sie wird aber nicht von den Werkeligen als solche empfunden, sondern nur von denen, die das Gesetz innerlich nehmen, den Armen im Geist, dem vom Sündengefühl Belasteten. Wie Kap. 4, 19; 19, 21; Joh. 7, 37, so paßt der Ruf auch hier nicht sowohl auf Menschen, die sich bereits als Jünger an Jesus angeschlossen hatten; er ist vielmehr eine Einladung an bisher noch Fernerstehende. Zahn: „Alle, welche in ermüdender Arbeit stehen und mit Lasten beladen sind, läßt Jesus ein, zu ihm zu kommen; und er lockt sie durch die Verheißung, daß er ihnen Ruhe, also Befreiung von der sie plagenden Mühe und der sie bedrückenden Last, schaffen werde.“ Stöckhardt: „Es verlangt ihn von Herzen danach, daß die armen Sünder zu ihrem Frieden kommen.“ Zahns Meinung, daß mit der Last die Sündenschuld nicht gemeint sein kann, sondern nur die der gesetzlichen Anforderungen, welche die bisherigen Lehrer des Volks diesem auferlegten, geht zu weit. Gerade diejenigen, die das Gesetz nach seinem innerlichen Verstand erfassen und sich ernstlich damit abquälen, empfinden die Sündenschuld um so mehr als eine unerträgliche Last. Luther: „Obgleich diese zwei Wörter, ‚die ihr mühselig und beladen seid‘, von den Trübsalen verstanden werden könnten, so beziehen sie sich doch eigentlich auf das Gewissen, welches außer Christo mühselig ist, das ist, sich auf mancherlei Weise ängstet und martert unter dem Gesetze und dessen Tyrannei. Denn es fühlt sich beladen mit Sünden, mit dem Jorne Gottes und mit dem Tode. Diese Last wollte es gerne von sich schütteln, aber es kann nicht. Deswegen leidet es Not; es wird elendiglich geängstet und gequält. Denn die Werke können ihm keinen Frieden geben noch seine Last von ihm nehmen. Und endlich würde es gezwungen, schlechterdings zu verzweifeln, wenn es nicht zu Christo ginge, der beides tut: er nimmt die Last hinweg, das ist, er erlöst die Sünde, und lindert die Mühe, das ist, macht fröhlich und sicher. Und so erquickt er oder gibt ihm Ruhe, daß es die Sünde nicht empfindet oder, wenn es sie empfindet, sie in Christo verachte.“ (VII, 137 f.)

B. 29. 30: „Nehmt mein Joch auf euch und lernt von mir, weil ich sanftmütig und von Herzen demütig bin, und ihr werdet für eure Seelen Erquickung finden. Denn mein Joch ist freundlich, und meine Last ist leicht.“ An das Joch, das Christus selbst trug, sein Kreuz —

so Olshausen und andere —, ist hier nicht zu denken; es bildet wenigstens nicht den Ausgangspunkt des Gedankens; sondern unter dem Joch meint Christus wohl, mit Anspielung auf das Joch des Gesetzes, seine Lehre und Führung oder, kurz, das Evangelium, dessen Annahme allerdings auch das Kreuz mit sich bringt. Wozu Jesus seine Zuhörer auffordert, ist kurz dies, durch gläubige Annahme seines Wortes seine Schüler zu werden, Joh. 8, 31. 32. Darum fährt er auch fort: „Lernt von mir.“ Jesus bietet sich den von den pharisäischen Gesetzesstreibern Geplagten als Heilslehrer an, der allein, den Vater kennend, ihnen den Weg zum Vater zeigen kann. Der Kontrast zwischen Gesetz und Evangelium findet sich auch zwischen den jüdischen Gesetzeslehrern und Jesu, dem Heilsverkündiger. Von sich sagt er aus: „weil ich sanftmütig und von Herzen demütig bin“. Wie das Evangelium süß und erquickend ist, so ist auch Jesus, der Prediger des Evangeliums, sanft, milde und freundlich. Das Adjektivum *ρηγός*, das sonst auch „gut“ oder „heilsam“ bedeutet, ist hier in seiner gewöhnlichen Bedeutung „sanftmütig“ beizubehalten. Jesus ist selbst gütig und wohlthuend, wie das von ihm verkündigte Evangelium freundlich und leicht ist, B. 30. Zahn übersetzt das *οὕτως* in B. 29 mit „daß“: „Lernt von mir, daß ich sanftmütig und demütigen Herzens bin.“ Doch ist nach dem Kontext dieser Satz wohl die Begründung der Aufforderung Christi, das Joch seiner Leitung anzunehmen und die Last seines Evangeliums tragen zu lernen. Durch seine persönliche Sanftmütigkeit im Gegensatz zur pharisäischen Strenge und Aufgeblasenheit wie auch durch die Süßigkeit und Lindigkeit seiner Heilslehre im Gegensatz zu der Tyrannei der Werkgerechtigkeit offenbarte sich Christus als der rechte, von Gott gesandte Prophet, der Messias und Erlöser seines Volkes, bei dem allein arme Sünder für ihre Seelen Erquickung finden konnten. Was das Sprachliche betrifft, so wäre noch zu bemerken, daß der Ausdruck: *μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ*, nicht bedeutet: „Lernt von meinem Beispiel“ (so Buttmann), sondern, wie auch im Deutschen: Lernt von meiner Verkündigung, wählt mich zu eurem Religionslehrer. Wohl dem, der sich unter das sanfte und leichte Joch der Heilslehre Christi beugt! Er wird in der Tat bald erkennen, daß Christi Joch freundlich und seine Last leicht, ja, daß das süße Evangelium eine Gotteskraft ist.

Bei Behandlung dieses Abschnitts ist von vornherein zu beachten, daß er als Adventstext dienen soll; daher muß denn auch die Einleitung darauf vorbereiten. Will man den ganzen Abschnitt behandeln, so könnte das folgende Thema dienen: Adventszeit — selige Zeit. Denn unser Adventskönig kommt, 1. um uns aufs neue zu belehren; 2. um uns aufs neue zu erquickern. — Die Adventsbotschaft: „Siehe, dein König kommt!“ Sie ist 1. den Weisen und Klugen der Welt eine Torheit; 2. den Mühseligen und Beladenen eine köstliche Freudenbotschaft. — Wer ist Jesus, unser lieber Adventskönig? 1. Er ist der ewige

Gottessohn; 2. er ist der von Gott gesandte Erlöser der Welt. — Warum dürfen wir uns über das Kommen unsers lieben Adventskönigs von Herzen freuen? 1. Er ist sanft und von Herzen demütig; 2. sein Joch ist sanft, und seine Last leicht. — Andere Themata wären: Jesus, unser Adventskönig. 1. Warum kommt er zu uns? 2. Warum sollen wir zu ihm eilen? — Wann allein können wir recht Advent feiern? 1. Wenn wir mühselig und beladen sind; 2. wenn wir Jesu Joch und Last auf uns nehmen. — Die große Adventsgnade, die Gott uns Sündern zugedacht hat. 1. Gott offenbart sich uns durch unsern lieben Adventskönig. 2. Gott schenkt uns durch ihn Heil und Seligkeit. — Die hohe Wichtigkeit der heiligen Adventszeit. 1. Sie ist eine ernste Zeit; prüft euch! 2. Sie ist eine selige Zeit; tröstet euch! J. T. M.

Farewell Sermon on 1 Thess. 5, 23—25.

It is God's will that we should part. After having been associated with each other as pastor and congregation for eight years, the thought of parting naturally is painful to us, and if we were to give expression to our feelings on this occasion, it would not be improper. But we shall try to refrain from doing so and shall instead consider how, when we have been separated bodily, we may still remain united spiritually in Him who has called us unto the same hope.

You will perhaps recall to-day how the Apostle Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem, when he was near Ephesus, sent for the elders of the congregation of that place to bid them farewell, knowing that they would see his face no more. Among other things that have been recorded regarding that parting, we notice that, when Paul had spoken his parting words to the brethren, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Acts 20, 36. Their parting prayer has not been recorded; but it goes without saying that, as the occasion demanded, he prayed for them, and they prayed for him.

In this way we shall bid each other farewell; and to this end we shall use the words with which Paul concludes his First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Basing my remarks on this passage, let me to-day say a few words on —

OUR PARTING PRAYER,

1. *My prayer for you;* 2. *Your prayer for me.*

1.

My prayer for you, my friends, on this occasion, shall be the prayer of the apostle for the congregation at Thessalonica: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

When I came to you eight years ago, I came as a messenger of the God of Peace. The message which He sent me—and you called me—to preach was the great message of the peace of God, the most precious message in the world, the glad tidings of

Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled,

“that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation. For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Cor. 5, 19, 21. It was the message which we have repeated so often in those golden words: “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3, 16. This message I have preached for eight years from your pulpit; this message I have brought to those who were in tribulation and sickness and wanted comfort; with this message I sought to cheer those who were passing out of this life to go before the judgment-seat of God; this message I proclaimed at your graves to soothe your grief and to dry your tears—the Gospel of the peace of God. And if I had stayed with you fifty years longer, I could have found no better message to proclaim, no, I should have had no other.

A few there were among us who did not receive this message. They did not know the time of their visitation. They loved the world, “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life”; and “if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 1 John 2, 15, 16. When the Gospel of grace was preached to these people plainly and clearly, it gradually became apparent that, though they were among us, they were not of us. For these I pray that their eyes may be opened and that they may come to the knowledge of the truth.

We are happy to think, however, that by most of those to whom I could bring the message of the peace of God during these eight years it was received as the message of God. Some were born again of this incorruptible seed of the Word, thus becoming children of God. Others found in this message nourishment for the faith that was already in them; they grew thereby in faith and in holiness. Thus by the message that I have preached the Holy Ghost has had His work of sanctification among you, calling, enlightening, sanctifying, and keeping you in the true faith.

And now that I am leaving you, what could I pray for but that this good work which has been begun in you might be performed until the Day of Jesus Christ, Phil. 1, 6; that “the very God of peace sanctify you wholly,” v. 23?

Whether we shall meet again in this life, we do not know. I may

never return, and if I do, I am quite sure that I shall not find you all here. For during the past eight years many a one has been called away. But we know that we shall meet again on that Great Day when all will have to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Then we shall either stand together at the right hand of the Savior and hear His precious words: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," or we shall face each other as those who are eternally separated. Whether we believe in the Savior or not will decide that question; for those who have accepted His righteousness shall then be blameless in His judgment. And so I pray "that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Many of you I have special cause to remember in my prayer with thanksgiving. They never failed to appear when I was to proclaim the message of peace to them, or when they were called upon to perform some work in the congregation. They gave their whole-hearted cooperation and encouraged their pastor wherever they could. Concerning those I would say, as Paul said of the house of Onesiphorus: "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that Day!" 2 Tim. 1, 16, 18. On the day when every cup of water given to a disciple of Christ in the blessed name of the Master shall be rewarded, then also he who received a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Matt. 10, 41.

Praying this prayer for you, I am confident that it will be heard. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

2.

But I have also a request to make to you. I would join the apostle in saying: "Brethren, pray for us." V. 25.

When the call came which is taking me away from you, you were loath to give your consent to my accepting it. But when you saw that I was in conscience bound to accept it, you wished me God's blessing for my future work. Now I am asking you to pray for me; and I know I shall not ask in vain: "Brethren, pray for us."

When Paul asked the prayer of the Christians at Thessalonica, he no doubt had in mind two things which they should pray for. He wanted to be a partaker of the Gospel with those to whom he preached. 1 Cor. 9, 23. He wanted to be both a believer in Christ and an apostle of Christ, 1 Cor. 9, 27, and by faith in the Savior inherit eternal life with his hearers. That is what he wanted their intercession for, and that is what I request your intercession for, that I might be kept in the true faith with you.

But Paul also wanted the prayer of his readers for success in his work. You know that the Lord has not only told us to pray Him,

"the Lord of the Harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest," Matt. 9, 38, but also that He would bless their work, Col. 4, 3. "Brethren, pray for us." I have just received a letter from the President of Synod, stating that throughout the Synod the brethren are thanking God because at last the office to which your pastor has been called has been filled, and filled by the calling of your pastor. Think of the work in South America, my friends, as a work of your Synod to which you have made a special contribution by giving up the services of your pastor for the benefit of that mission, and let it be a special object of your prayers.

I shall close with the words of the apostle: "Finally, brethren, farewell! Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. 13, 11. Amen.

PRAYER.

O Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, since this Thy flock is now without a pastor, we entreat Thee, turn Thine eyes upon these Thy people and graciously regard their need. Let them continue steadfast in Thy pure Word and in Thine own good time send them a faithful steward of Thy mysteries, who, holding fast the confession of the truth, shall feed them in singleness of mind. As Thou hast planted Thy vineyard in this place, do Thou visit it and water it abundantly with the dew of Thy blessing by Thy holy Word. Grant unto Thy Church peace, unity, safety, and prosperity; and establish Thy work by the power of Thy Spirit to the glory of Thy name and the salvation of immortal souls, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Porto Alegre, Brazil.

J. N. H. JAHN.

Outline on Ps. 24.

First Sunday in Advent.

(This outline is the first of a series on Old Testament texts for the Sundays and festivals of the ensuing church-year.)

Matt. 21, 1—9 is the old favorite Gospel-lesson for this Sunday. It records the precise fulfilment of Zech. 9, 9 and vividly describes the kingdom of Christ.

David, in our text, treats the same subject. The people of God of the Old Covenant attached much importance to this psalm, singing it in the daily service of the Temple on the first day of the week. (Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 172.) Since we have heretofore, at various times, based our sermons on the well-known Gospel-lessons and since all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, etc., 2 Tim. 3, 16 f., we shall during this new church-year give our prayerful attention to texts taken from the Old Testament. As stated, we have before us to-day

DAVID'S DESCRIPTION OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

He describes

1. *The King;*
2. *The subjects.*

1.

David, in the text, portrays the triumphal entrance of a King. Did he pen this poem on the eventful day when the Ark of the Covenant was returned to David's city, 2 Sam. 6, 17, after it had been at Kirjath-jearim twenty years, 1 Sam. 7, 2? Some so assume. True, Jehovah dwelt in glory over the Ark, in the Shekinah, in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple, Ex. 40, 34; Num. 14, 10; 16, 42; 20, 6; 1 Kings 8, 16; and so the Tabernacle was the place where His honor (glory) dwelt, Ps. 26, 8. David, however, is plainly speaking, not of some sacred object which was brought back to Jerusalem, but of a highly distinguished person who is making His entrance into His city as a great King.

"Who is this King of Glory?" Vv. 8, 10. This question, put twice and perhaps sung by a separate choir, directs attention to this King in a very forceful manner.

David says He is the mighty Jehovah, v. 8, who puts all enemies to rout. He is Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts. V. 10; Is. 40, 26; Ps. 68, 17. He is the Creator and Possessor of all things. V. 1 f. His glory is from everlasting to everlasting. Is. 9, 7. And still He comes in visible form through the portals opened wide for Him. Vv. 7, 9. His subjects can see and greet Him even though He is the everlasting Jehovah Sabaoth. He is the God of salvation, who dispenses blessings and righteousness. V. 5.

Who is this remarkable King? Christ is both the Lord of Glory, 1 Cor. 2, 8; Titus 2, 13; John 1, 1 ff., and our Brother after the flesh, who came and dwelt among us, John 1, 11, 14. Cp. Isaiah's prophecy, 40, 5: "All flesh shall see it together"; v. 9: "Behold your God!" It was He who came in the name of the Lord. Matt. 21, 9. His coming spelled defeat to all His enemies, the savage enemies of our soul. Luke 1, 71. Thus He is the Lord of our salvation, Jehovah Our Righteousness. Jer. 23, 6. He offers grace and peace to all. His kingdom is indestructible ("everlasting doors," vv. 7, 9); for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 16, 18.

He is your King. Thus He came to you for your eternal salvation. What condescension! Does your heart leap for joy? Are you prepared to receive Him? Let us see who His subjects are.

2.

Since the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof and since the world and all that dwell therein are His possession, v. 1, He sways all nations by the beck of His scepter. His is the Kingdom of Power.

But note the significant questions of the psalmist. V. 3. His

subjects are a "peculiar people" (the people of His possession). 1 Pet. 2, 9. Not all who are His subjects by virtue of His power are His by virtue of His grace. "The hill of the Lord" is Zion and "His holy place" is the Temple. Ps. 132, 13 f. But these were of importance to Him only because His chosen generation, His true believers, gathered there. Ps. 135, 4; 33, 12; 89, 3 f. The visible Temple is destroyed, but the spiritual temple remained. His Zion, His true believers of old, prefigured the Church of the New Testament.

David's description of Christ's subjects tallies herewith. V. 4. They have clean hands and pure hearts because, by grace, they have been made pure. Ps. 51, 10. They are cleansed by the blood of Christ. These believers receive righteousness from the God of their salvation. V. 5. Note how they come to the altar of the Lord. Ps. 26, 6. But they also strive to keep themselves clean. Cp. Ps. 15. They live in sanctification. They do not lift up their soul to vanity. The greatest vanity is trusting in one's own righteousness. Nor do they swear deceitfully, or: they do not swear to deceit. The most flagrant deception is false doctrine. Cp. Ps. 26, 4 f.; 1, 1. — These are His subjects, the true seed of Jacob. Cp. Is. 44, 2; Rom. 9, 6; Gal. 6, 16. (F. Delitzsch calls *jaakob* a summarizing predicate and says: "Das mehrfaeltige Praedikat konzentriert sich wohlverstaendlich in dem *einen jaakob*, auf das es abzielt.")

Selah. Vv. 6. 10. Let us take this word as indicating that here the instrumental music should set in to give the singing congregation time to meditate on the sublime truths expressed. Yes, let us most thoughtfully and seriously weigh the greatness of our King and most earnestly search our hearts whether we are His loyal subjects. 2 Cor. 13, 5.

B.

What Does the Bible Teach Concerning Christian Giving?*

For the sake of those who dislike to hear appeals for money made by the Church and upon such occasions are apt to cry out, "The Church is always a-begging!" it should be said that no other organization could continue to run its business successfully if it did this

* This article and the following two outlines are to provide helpful material, stimulation, and direction for those who are preparing sermons on the subject of Christian liberality, to incite our members to reach out for the higher goal of larger gifts for the upbuilding of the Church. If some find in it enough to furnish them a series of sermons on the subject, so much the better; but let each pastor consider the needs of his people and the demands of prevailing conditions. — In this connection, however, we would offer the suggestion that the material here presented be developed into at least two sermons, the first stressing stewardship, or the "why" of giving, the second setting forth the needs of the Church and thus showing our Christians for what purposes their gifts are needed: for the Church at home and abroad. — EDITOR.

as the Church conducts its financial affairs. What if our cars and our trains would offer you rides and trips from one city to another and tell those who accept the invitation that in payment for this trip they may contribute according to their means and as the Lord has prospered them? What if a good hotel would offer lodging and food and leave it to each customer to contribute for what he gets as he is able and willing? Such a hostelry would not last a month. The Church provides buildings, books, teachers, light, ventilation, cleanliness, instruction, and much other equipment and service without sending any one a bill, simply requesting each member to contribute to this work "as God hath prospered him." 1 Cor. 16, 2. It is not that the Church is too insistent and demanding; rather, the Church is robbed and cheated. *The true Church of Jesus Christ has never received in money and service what it ought to have received; it has been robbed.* It continues to be poor, while for ages it has been making many rich. There is much injustice and unfairness in this wicked world, but to this day the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy Child of God, and His true Church have been dealt with more unjustly and more cruelly and have been robbed more shamelessly than any one else on this earth. God to this day must say to the world and even to Christians: "Ye have robbed Me." Mal. 3, 8.

That even the Christians, even the best of them, need instruction, admonition, warning, and guidance in this matter of Christian liberality and giving is attested by the fact that much of such instruction, warning, and encouragement is found in the Word of God. On this subject also it is such an easy matter to spread false opinions that the unadulterated truth, together with the refutation of error must continually be preached and taught. When Mary devoted a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, to anoint the feet of Jesus, Judas, who was at that time a disciple in good standing, criticized this rich gift and tried to confuse the issue by calling attention to the need of the poor. John 12, 4—6. When in the days of the apostles the disciples at Jerusalem cheerfully shared their goods with each other, Ananias and Sapphira gave way to covetousness and sought to cheat the Church and to deceive the Holy Ghost. Acts 5, 3. And so it has been throughout the ages of the Church. St. Paul had to admonish even the Corinthian Christians that they were to remember that it was no great thing that they should give of their earthly things to those who were sowing to them spiritual things. 1 Cor. 9, 11. On Christian giving, therefore, the best of us need instruction, admonition, and encouragement.

Whom Does the Lord Invite to Give?

One of the first things every one is to learn about giving is this, that God asks no one to give before He Himself has made that person rich, very rich. Before God asks us to give, He invites us to take.

When Jesus at one time entered the house of Peter's mother-in-law, He found her sick. The first thing He did was to heal her and make her well, *and then* we are told that she served Him. That is our Lord's way at all times and with all — He gives us the greatest wealth first before He asks one penny of us. If God has not given you treasures, then you are not the one to give. You are first of all to take. Through His Word, God is continually offering you inheritances, kingdoms, conquests, in short, temporal and eternal wealth. If you have them not, it is because you did not take them. There is only one way of taking these treasures, and that is *by faith*, by believing what God promises us and offers to us in His Word. By faith and confidence in God's Word and promise we accept and take what He offers. Let me repeat because it is so very important: *You are not to give a thing till you have first of all taken what God offers you.* The Bible expressly states: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." That is a very clear and unmistakable word. Even though you gave mountains of gold for Church or for charity, if you had no faith, your gifts would not please God. God expressly told the unbelieving Jews that He did not want their sacrifices and their gifts because the offerings were offered without true faith. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offering of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand to tread My courts?" Is. 1, 11. 12. "I will take no bullock out of thy house nor he-goats out thy folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?" Ps. 50, 9—13. Before God requests us to give anything, He first of all wishes to make us rich heirs of heaven. People who through repentance of sin and faith in the Savior are washed from their filth and have been adopted as the children of the King of kings and Lord of lords; people who have been made kings and priests in the city of God and heirs of the riches of earth and of heaven; people to whom God has given all things on this earth and to whom He intends to give the joys and pleasures, and the rest and peace, and the inheritance undefiled of eternity, — these are the ones who are to give and no other. God asks no gift from the poor slave of Satan or the captive of vice or the mammon servant, who is on his way to eternal damnation. From such paupers, whose hearts are dark with despair and who are on the road to eternal gloom, God requests no gift. "Without faith it is impossible to please God"; for without faith man is filthy with sin, a slave of iniquity, naked, and helpless.

But after you have received from God His perfect forgiveness of sin, Christ's righteousness, and His guarantee that you shall never want, but will always be provided abundantly with all that you need for body and soul; in other words, after God has taken you out of the pauper class and made you one of His children and heirs, then He expects you to give. In short, God invites those to give who are even now asking: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"

Are you a child of God by faith? Do you believe that your Father in heaven forgives all your sin and will surely provide for you here and hereafter? Are you grateful? Are you crying out: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me"? Then you are one of those blessed persons whom God invites to give for His work, His kingdom, and His saints.

And be sure that God wants all of His Christians to give. Not only the rich, but also the poor; not only adults, but also children. Rich Joseph of Arimathea gives a tomb, the widow gives her mite, old Simeon and Anna proclaim the glory of Jesus, and "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" the Savior accepts prayers. Mary gives costly ointment, a lad gives a few loaves and fishes. In the Christian Church *every member* is to give. All Christians, young and old, rich and poor, are givers.

What is to be Given?

When giving is spoken of, most people think of money. But money is by no means the only thing which is to be given. Paul tells us that the Macedonian Christians, before they gave money, first of all "gave their own selves to the Lord." 2 Cor. 8, 5. That is what God wants us to give — *ourselves*. He has said: "My son, give Me thine heart." Prov. 23, 26. Giving money will not be a difficult matter if you first surrender yourself to the Lord. We Christians must remember that we were not redeemed that we might continue to serve sin and Satan, but that Jesus "died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." 2 Cor. 5, 15. The health and strength and abilities of our bodies are to be devoted to God's service, the powers of our mind, the whole love, affection, and devotion of which the regenerated heart is capable. In short, we are to be ready to devote to God's will and service all that we have in our person or in our possession. If we have the ability to speak or to write, we are to serve God by these powers. If we have time and means, we are to devote them to God's service. If God has given us money, little or much, it is to be at God's service. The truly converted Christian joins Paul in asking God: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Acts 9, 6. The grateful child of God cries out: "What shall I render

unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" The child whom God has received as an heir of divine, heavenly, and eternal riches sings:—

Take my life and let it be	Take my love, my Lord, I pour
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.	At Thy feet its treasure-store;
Take my moments and my days,	Take myself, and I will be
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.	Ever, only, all for Thee.

In short, the Christian gives himself and all that he has to the Lord.

If some one becomes alarmed and asks: "If we are to give all to God, how are we and our children to live?" he should remember two things: First, that God is not a hard and cruel Master, who demands that we and our families starve and perish. On the contrary, He gives us our earthly means and tells us that we are to use these for the support of ourselves and our families. That is the express will of God, that we employ our money in furnishing our families with their necessities, not to rob our families in order to give to the Church. He has rather declared: "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." 1 Tim. 5, 8. The Pharisees and scribes taught the Jews that children could be excused from their duty to support their old, dependent parents by simply saying: "Corban," *i. e.*, "It is a gift," and giving the money to the Temple. But Jesus justly condemns this detestable hypocrisy. If God bestows upon us our earthly goods, it is His will that we first of all support ourselves and our own household. But having done this, having supplied our necessities, — not luxuries, much less the means for debauchery and excess, — we Christians are also to contribute according to our means for the up-keep of school and church. In fact, this is a part of the proper support of our own household, because God wishes us Christians to have more than the beasts of the field have. He also wants us to have spiritual sustenance; He wants the Word of God to dwell in us richly. Christians are therefore also to be devoted to their duties and diligent in their business for this very purpose, that they may not only have what is necessary for the support of their bodies, but that they may also support church and school for themselves and their dependents.

In the second place, we are not to accuse God of demanding of us what we have not to give. If God has not given you a singing voice, God does not expect you to sing solos in church for Him. If God has not given you health and strength, He does not ask you to do what none but the well and strong can do. If you have not the gift of preaching which Paul and Peter had, God does not ask you to preach such sermons as Paul and Peter preached. God does not ask a pauper, an inmate of a poorhouse, to give a million dollars for Church and missions. It is not true that God is unjust and asks

more of us than we can afford. God has expressly told us that He wants us to give "according to that a man hath and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. 8, 12. And He has told us that each is to give "as God hath prospered him." 1 Cor. 16, 2. It is foolish and sinful to think that God demands of us what we cannot afford to give. To accuse God of making unjust demands is the shameful sin of the old Adam in us, who would make us out ungrateful paupers under a hard and cruel master, when in reality we are blessed, rich, and happy children of God, who daily and richly provides us with all that we need to support this body and life.

How Christians Are to Give.

God tells us: "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. 13, 16. And again the Lord tells us: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9, 7. Paul praises the Macedonian Christians because they gave so cheerfully and willingly that before he asked them, they were "willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift." 2 Cor. 8, 3, 4. We Christians still have in us the Old Adam, who is never willing to do what pleases God, but either greedily wishes to hoard what he has or in lusts and profligacy wishes to squander on his own carnal desires what he can lay hold of. This unwilling fellow must be hushed, aye, drowned, so that he dies and the new man in us have a chance to give *cheerfully and gladly*.

And because we do it cheerfully, therefore we ought to "abound in this grace also." 2 Cor. 8, 7. Jesus encourages us to give *generously* by telling us that "with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6, 38. In the Old Testament God forbade the sacrifice of a worthless or crippled animal. He commanded the Jews to sacrifice the best that they had. Thereby God showed us that He wants us not to come with a trifle or with a defective gift, but with as much as we can afford. We are to give *cheerfully and richly*.

In the third place, God wants us to give as long as *He supplies us with what we may give*. We are *never to grow weary* of giving, just as God never grows weary of giving to us. Therefore St. Paul exhorts us: "Let us not be weary in well-doing." Gal. 6, 9. And again the same apostle writes: "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing." 2 Thess. 3, 13.

From the Scriptures we also learn that it is pleasing to God that the Christians give *regularly*. In the Old Testament the Jews were bound to give from time to time and at regular intervals. In the New Testament St. Paul advises the Christians: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath

prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16, 2. St. Paul wanted no disorderly haste, but systematic giving. Giving for the support of church, school, missions, and charities is to be with every Christian a regular thing. Special gifts, also large donations, may be made at any time when we feel so inclined and when God has blessed us in a larger measure than usual, or when the need is especially pressing. Thus the centurion of Capernaum himself built a synagog. Joseph of Arimathea gave his own new tomb to Jesus. Mary gave a box of costly ointment. But there are regular expenditures in the work of the Church, and Christians should so arrange their contributions that the congregation may rely upon a regular income.

It follows from this that the giving of the Christian should be *orderly*. To the same people at Corinth whom St. Paul instructed in regular giving he also gave instruction in orderly giving. And here he mentions two things. First, all are to participate, so that some men may not be overlooked and others burdened. It is not God's will that a few persons in the congregation should bear all the burdens, or that some few people in Synod should meet all expenses and be expected to give more than they are able, whereas others are doing nothing or very little. Such inequality is not in accordance with God's will. That does not mean that all should give equal amounts, but that each one should give in accordance with his means and ability. Just as St. Paul also writes that the abundance of some is to supply the want of others; and that again, at another time, in another matter, the abundance of those who were supplied will again supply the want of those who at another time had an abundance. There is to be fraternal love, consideration, and helpfulness in all our giving. Some are to sow spiritual things and reap carnal things, and some are to bestow their carnal things and reap spiritual things. Each is to serve the Lord with that gift which God has given him. It is therefore perfectly natural that those who are especially blessed with this world's goods should consider it their privilege and duty and a real joy to give generously. Thus God has said: "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." 1 Tim. 6, 17, 18. Another thing which St. Paul mentions is that the money affairs of a congregation, of our Synod, and of missions must be handled in an *orderly* way. St. Paul himself, in administering funds, saw to it that he avoided this, that no man should blame him in the abundance which he was administering. 2 Cor. 8, 20. And he told the Christians that they were to provide for honest things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men. V. 21. It is God's will, therefore, that money matters be handled in an exact and orderly way, so that

we may prove to any and every one that the funds are actually expended for the purposes for which they were given. Giving receipts, keeping books, and having accounts audited are all in accordance with God's will.

We also note that God warns us against giving with *ostentation* in order to *be seen of men*. All boasting and braggadocio is detestable and repulsive to men of good sense and right feeling. The Bible also condemns it in severe terms. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6, 1—4. But let us keep in mind that while ostentation is hypocritical and displeasing to God, yet it is God's will that the good deeds of the Christians be made known. For the example of such Christians should encourage others to do likewise. How could the zeal of the Corinthians have provoked very many if their zeal had not been known? 2 Cor. 9, 2. God wants the good deeds of His Christians mentioned, spoken of, praised, pointed out. Indeed, on Judgment Day even those deeds which are now unknown will be mentioned and proclaimed aloud before heaven and earth. This does not contradict what we said about giving without ostentation. Many a one has done a good deed without any thought of its ever becoming known, which was nevertheless made known, praised, and spoken of in the whole world; *e. g.*, the woman who anointed Jesus' feet.

What Is to Induce Us Christians to Give Liberally, Continually, Cheerfully, and Never to Weary of Giving?

1. In the first place, we Christians are to remember that just in this way, by the giving of others, we were blessed and made rich. We did not earn, we did not deserve or merit, the blessings which we have, we were not even worthy of them, but all that we have is God's unmerited gift. "Freely ye have received." Matt. 10, 8. There isn't a person on this earth who has anything good which he did not receive from God as a gift. God can say to every person on this earth: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. 4, 7. And now, as we have freely received, not only directly from God, but also through those who served God, through our parents, teachers, relatives, friends, and others, so we are to pass on the good gifts which God has bestowed upon us. We are richly and daily receiving from God, also through our fellow-men, blessing upon blessing. At great sacrifices, pastors and teachers have taught and instructed us in our

youth and led us to the Savior. Freely we have received, let us therefore also freely give.

2. But Christians should also consider that God has expressly told us that we are to give. The sum of all the commandments of God is this, that we should love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. But how can there be any genuine, true love where there is no giving? The great love that parents have for their children is attested by the great sacrifices which they make for these children. This is a matter so clear and plain that it requires very few words. The Bible expressly admonishes us: "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." 1 John 3, 18. In the most severe terms the Bible condemns him who declares that he loves his brother, but is not willing to give him anything or to aid him in need and distress. Jas. 2, 15, 16.

3. The Bible encourages us to give also by pointing out that our giving will encourage others to give. We have had occasion to mention that the zeal of the Corinthians provoked many others. And St. Paul, on the other hand, uses the zeal of the Macedonian Christians to encourage the disciples in Corinth. In the 8th and 9th chapters of his second letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul mentions the great sacrifices, the great willingness, the devotion, and the zeal of the Macedonian Christians in giving for the spread of the Gospel, and again, when he spoke to those of Macedonia, he boasted of the liberality, generosity, and willing gifts of the Corinthians. That is God's will, that one Christian encourage the other, and that we be provoked and moved to do good by seeing others doing the works which please God. Let this, then, be an encouragement for us to give, that we do not only please God thereby, we do not only do good to those who are in need, we do not only bring the Gospel to those who are in darkness, but we encourage others also zealously to serve and to sacrifice.

4. In order to encourage us in giving, the apostle also mentions examples. First of all he mentions the example of the Lord Jesus Himself. 2 Cor. 8, 9. He points out that, though Jesus was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. St. Paul at other times mentions those who risked their lives for the sake of the Lord Jesus. He mentions his own example, that he made no demands upon those to whom he first of all preached the Gospel, but labored with his own hands in order to procure the necessities for himself. Acts 20, 34. Luther's generosity, liberality and willingness to help and to give are well known. Whereas we scarcely have a word or a letter from him in which he asks anything for himself. That is the company and family into which we have been adopted. Shall we not demonstrate our right to be there?

5. Another reason that ought to encourage us to give is the blessedness that we find in giving itself. Whoever looks upon giving as a burden, as a hardship, as a difficult and painful duty, certainly has not the Spirit of Christ. Jesus says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20, 35. Who is more blessed, who is happier, the beggar who is receiving the alms at the door or he who is able to give the alms? It is one of the greatest blessings and pleasures of life to be taken out of the class which begs and receives to be transferred into the class which gives and to whom men appeal for help, because they know they are able and willing to help every good cause. How many children, how many faithful Christians, pray down blessings every day upon the heads of families and the homes of those who have given them help! Indeed, one of the greatest privileges that God can bestow upon a person on this earth is this, that He makes him a giver. By nature we are all beggars. But if God, the Giver of every good gift, takes us into His own company, gives us so much that we may now begin to give to others, He certainly bestows a wonderful blessing upon us. Certainly that ought to encourage every one of us to give, praying that God may retain us in the company of those who give and bestow.

6. The true Christian soon discovers that giving is a spiritual joy. God gives us our gifts *that we may enjoy them*. 1 Tim. 6, 17. And He wants us to enjoy them by giving of them for the upbuilding of His kingdom and for bringing joy and happiness to others. You have not tasted the true joys and pleasures of life if you have not allowed others to share your blessings with you. Oh, what a pleasure, what an honor, what a privilege, what a glory, that God should use us and make of us channels to bring happiness, joy, and blessings to others! What a triumph the doctor enjoys when through his successful and skilful operation he has given eyesight to the blind! If you had saved a life from drowning by your skill in swimming, would you not enjoy receiving the gratitude of the one whose life you had saved? Very few of us, however, will ever have an opportunity to save one from blindness or to save one from drowning. But through our small gifts we may assist in rescuing the slaves of Satan who are about to perish for eternity and to fall into eternal damnation, to be delivered and to become sons of God and heirs of an eternal kingdom of happiness. Is it not an exquisite joy to take part in such blessed giving?

7. And finally, God also wishes to encourage us in giving by telling us that He is going to reward us for everything that we give, even for the smallest gift. Now, it is true that we Christians are not to give for the sake of a reward. We have received freely, and therefore we should freely give, without a thought of a reward. If a poor boy wishes and longs for an education and some wealthy man

takes pity upon him and sends him to school and pays his board and tuition, and the young fellow studies hard and graduates with honor, should he ask his wealthy benefactor to give him a reward for his diligent study? I trow not. Just so, when God has given us an abundance of His gifts and permits us to participate in giving to others, how could we ask for a reward for all this? And yet, it does happen that a student who does well is given a reward by his benefactor, by his father, or by some one else who has taken an interest in him. That is not a wage, that is a reward of grace. And just so God also, although we are the ones who are under obligation to Him for all our gifts, even for the privilege of being among those who give to others, nevertheless promises us a reward. He tells us that we are not to be impoverished by our giving; far from it, by giving we shall be still more enriched. He says: "Give, and it shall be given unto you." That does not mean that we are simply to receive again what we have given; it means that we are to receive much more than we have given. In order to encourage us in this and to picture to us what a liberal giver may expect from God, He uses these words: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6, 38. Scripture tells the Christians that "God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labor of love." Heb. 6, 10. Christ tells us that if we give a cup of cold water in His name, we shall not lose our reward. Matt. 10, 42. Indeed, we may be sure of this, that the same generous, good, kind Lord who gave us so much without our merit or desert is going to surprise us with what He will give us as a gracious reward for true Christian liberality. In the 25th chapter of Matthew He pictures to us the surprise of the Christians when they receive their rewards for the little that they have done here upon this earth. When the riches, the kingdoms, and the happiness fall to their share from their rich Lord, they cry out: "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred and fed Thee, or thirsty and gave Thee drink?" They will be amazed at the undeserved riches and blessings which God bestows upon them. All sowing on this earth is more or less uncertain of its reward. The farmer does not know what kind of weather there will be; he hopes for a harvest, but he knows that there may be drought, there may be floods, there may be hail, there may be frost; and not only the seed that is sown in the ground, but all his hard labor may be in vain and his hopes put to shame. But when we give as the Lord directs us, we have His guarantee — and He cannot lie — that we are going to reap; "for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Gal. 6, 9. Indeed, those who discourage Christian giving do Christians a great wrong. Those are the benefactors of the Christians who show them opportunities for giving for the kingdom of Christ. For this reaping

will not only be sure and certain, it will be an *eternal* reaping. There will be no end to the reaping.

For all that we have said we have God's sure and infallible Word. That ought to suffice us. But to encourage us still more, we are to be reminded also of the examples of givers and their blessings. Thus Jacob at one time left his father's rich home and served others as a hired man. He trusted that God would bless him. And God dealt with him so generously, so rich did He make him, that Jacob was surprised and cried out: "I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant." Gen. 32, 10. That is exactly what every one shall experience who believes and acts upon that saying of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Indeed, Christian giving is the most profitable investment there is on this earth. Our giving here is a mere sowing, from which we are to reap a rich crop. The Shunammite woman gave shelter and food to one of the prophets of God, and what a rich harvest did she reap right here on this earth, not to speak of eternity! God bestowed upon her not only a son, but also delivered that son from death. How small was the gift, the shelter and food which she never missed; but how precious was that child to her, and how much more precious did he become when he was delivered from death! Moses gave up all the riches of Egypt and chose rather to suffer affliction with the children of God. It seemed like a great sacrifice; yet in reality Moses has reaped riches of glory beyond all calculation. And time fails me to speak of others who gave: of Boaz, David, Solomon, Dorcas, Lydia, Cornelius, Onesiphorus, and millions more who sowed bountifully and reaped bountifully. 2 Cor. 9, 6. S.

Disposition zu einer Predigt über 2 Kor. 9, 6—8.

Die Christen, die Kinder Gottes, unterscheiden sich auf mannigfache Weise von den Kindern dieser Welt, den Ungläubigen. Ihre Arbeit und ihr Verhalten in den Obliegenheiten ihres Amtes und Berufes mögen nach außen gerade so aussehen wie die entsprechenden Werke der Ungläubigen. Aber es besteht zwischen ihnen und den andern ein großer Unterschied. Die Christen wissen z. B., daß sie alle Güter und Gaben, die Gott ihnen verliehen hat, nicht absolut innehaben und damit schalten und walten können nach Belieben, sondern daß sie nur die zeitweiligen Haushalter derselben sind. Und in ihrem ganzen Verhalten Gott gegenüber kommt zum Ausdruck, was der Apostel in den Worten zusammengefaßt hat: „Die Liebe Christi dringet uns also“, 2 Kor. 5, 14. Weil die Kraft des auferstandenen Heilandes in den Christen wohnt, darum ist auch die Liebe zu ihm und zu dem Werke, das er uns aufgetragen hat, die Triebfeder und die Triebkraft in der ganzen kirchlichen Arbeit, die wir in seinem Namen unternehmen.

Diese Wahrheit findet ihre Anwendung auch auf die Gelder, die Gott für das Werk seiner Kirche auf Erden nötig hat. Die Christen lassen sich gern ermuntern, daß sie in dem Werk der Kirche nicht laß und träge werden, sondern um Christi willen sich mehr als willig und bereit finden lassen, des Herrn Arbeit zu tun. Dazu soll auch unsere heutige Betrachtung dienen. Wir richten unsere Aufmerksamkeit auf das Wort des Apostels:

„Einen fröhlichen Geber hat Gott lieb“

und lassen uns aus Gottes Wort zeigen:

1. wer geben soll; 2. wie gegeben werden soll;
3. wieviel gegeben werden soll.

1.

Wer soll geben? Antwort: Ein jeglicher, jeder Christ, wer immer die geistlichen Wohltaten an sich erfahren hat und noch erfährt.

a. So redet die Schrift davon. — Der Apostel redet alle seine Leser an, alle, die diesen Brief hörten, die ganze Gemeinde. Er sagt ausdrücklich: „Ein jeglicher.“ So ergibt es sich aus dem ganzen Kontext, Kap. 8 und 9. — So wurde es in der Gemeinde Gottes im Alten Testament gehalten, und zwar nicht nur nach den Vorschriften des Gesetzes, sondern ganz besonders auch in den Dankopfern solcher Glieder des Volkes, die sich gedrungen fühlten, dem Herrn ihren Dank in besonderer Weise kundzutun. — So sollte es vor allem sein jetzt, im Neuen Testament, da wir nicht mehr unter dem Gesetz sind, sondern unter der Gnade, da eigentlich unser ganzes Leben ein stetes Dankopfer für Gottes unaussprechliche Gabe sein sollte, da alle vor Gott Könige und Priester sind.

b. So ergibt es sich aus dem Wesen unserer kirchlichen Arbeit. — Alle, ein jeglicher, haben die Barmherzigkeit Gottes erfahren und erfahren sie noch täglich in der Vergebung ihrer Sünden. — Alle sind von der Liebe Christi durchdrungen und fühlen sich von dieser Liebe getrieben. — Alle, ein jeglicher, sind imstande, etwas zu tun. Die vielen Gaben der einzelnen Christen wachsen an zu großen Haufen. Wenn sich einer auf den andern verläßt, dann geschieht wenig oder gar nichts; wenn jeder zugreift, dann kann die Arbeit des Herrn ausgeführt werden.

2.

Wie soll gegeben werden? Antwort: Nicht mit Unwillen, sondern mit fröhlichem Geist.

a. Nicht mit Unwillen; nicht in Betrübnis. Nicht im Sinne der Klage über das „ewige Geben“; nicht so, daß das Herz dabei traurig und widerwillig ist. Gaben unter solchen Umständen haben keinen sittlichen Wert. — Nicht aus Zwang; nicht aus Not. Nicht in der Gesinnung: Ich muß wohl, sonst werde ich noch scheel angesehen; sie lassen mir doch keine Ruhe, bis ich wieder einmal gezeichnet oder ge-

geben habe. Auf einer solchen Gesinnung ruht nicht das Wohlgefallen Gottes.

b. Sondern nach seiner Willkür, wie er sich vorgesetzt hat im Herzen, mit völliger Willigkeit. Wenn ein Christ sich einmal vorgenommen hat, im Werke des Herrn mitzuhelfen, so faßt er diesen Entschluß ganz unabhängig von dem Urtheil und dem Belieben seines alten Adams. Seine Willigkeit ist gleichsam auch ein Stolz darüber, daß er gewürdigt ist, mit teilzunehmen an dem großen Werk der Kirche. — Mit fröhlichem Herzen. Es ist Tatsache und ist schon in Tausenden von Fällen bestätigt worden, daß Geben seliger ist denn Nehmen. Es ist nicht nur das Bewußtsein einer gewissen Befriedigung über die Erfüllung einer Liebespflicht, sondern ein erhabenes Gefühl der zufriedenen Dankbarkeit gegen Gott. Dies ist wohl zu unterscheiden von prahlerischem Selbstbewußtsein.

3.

Wie viel soll gegeben werden? Antwort: Im Segen; reichlich; reich zu allerlei guten Werken.

a. Rüglichses Säen ist ein Fehlgriff, wie das jeder Landmann weiß. Der Ertrag ist gering, steht im Verhältnis zu dem ausgestreuten Samen. So auch in der Arbeit des Reiches Gottes.

b. Dagegen: im Segen, im Verhältnis zu der Fruchtbarkeit der Scholle, das heißt, nachdem Gott einen jeglichen im Irdischen gesegnet hat. Reich zu allerlei guten Werken. Wie sich die Arbeit der Kirche gestaltet, nach dem, wie sich das Bedürfnis zeigt. Steigen die Ansprüche, so ist das meistens ein Beweis dafür, daß Gott reichen Segen gegeben hat.

Schluß. Dabei immer zu merken, daß Gott es ist, der da machen kann, daß allerlei Gnade unter euch reichlich sei. Er ist es, der uns die Gnade zu Bewußtsein führen und uns stärken kann zu voller Willigkeit.

K.

Sermon Outline on 1 Cor. 16, 1. 2.

St. Paul was a great teacher. The accounts of his life and of his missionary activity in Acts and in his own epistles show how careful he was to preach the true doctrine, free from all error. He is ever anxious to indoctrinate his people. They should grow in grace and knowledge. Examples: Justification by faith, Rom. 3, 20 ff.; Christ's resurrection and ours, 1 Cor. 15; the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11, 20 ff.; Baptism, Titus 3, 5 f.; and others.

The great apostle was also a very practical man. With his other fine qualities he combined those of an executive and organizer, who knew how to give attention to detail, how, with exquisite tact, to direct the lives of individuals and the affairs of congregations. Note his directions to Timothy and Titus, his exhortations to the members of his congregations, etc.

In his concern for well-ordered congregational activity he frequently mentions the duty of Christian giving, giving to the poor, supporting the ministry and the work of the Church. This is a necessary and an important phase of church endeavor. Cf. Acts 20, 35; Rom. 12, 13; Gal. 6, 10; 1 Tim. 6, 18; Heb. 13, 16.

This is a matter which concerns us very much. We, too, are asked to give for various purposes; we have a ministry to support, as well as missions and educational and charitable institutions. We also need instruction in Christian giving. The Holy Spirit, through the mouth of the apostle, would also be our Teacher.

THE APOSTLE'S DIRECTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN GIVING.

- 1. He indicates the motive which should actuate it.*
- 2. He names those who should practise it.*
- 3. He describes the manner in which it should be practised.*

1.

During the third missionary journey, Paul was engaged in gathering money for the relief of the Christian poor in Jerusalem. Cf. Gal. 2, 10; 2 Cor. 8 and 9; Rom. 15, 25. 26. Collection had been started previously in Galatia; in Macedonia it had been warmly taken up, 2 Cor. 8 f.; from Acts 20, 4 we learn that the Asians also (from Ephesus and vicinity) accompanied Paul in the deputation which conveyed the Gentile offering to the mother church. — A little later, in writing to Rome, Rom. 15, 25—32, the apostle refers to the collection, with great satisfaction, as completed. Every province of Paul's mission seems to have aided in this charity, which, while prompted by love for the poor and a desire to knit together the Gentile and Jewish sections of the Church, in other words, to build the Church, was also a proof to the latter, the Jewish Christians, of the true faith and brotherhood of the converts from heathenism. 2 Cor. 9, 11—14.

The apostle wants the Corinthians to take part in the collection. The context shows the motive which should underlie their participation. In the foregoing chapter he had spoken of the great love of God in Christ and our victory over death through Christ. 1 Cor. 15, 57. His conclusion in v. 58 is logical. "It follows as the natural exercise of that divine love which is shed abroad in the hearts and which likens us to that Redeemer who freely gave Himself for us all, and demands of us that we give as freely as we have received." Cf. 2 Cor. 8, 1—10; note especially vv. 8. 9.

We, too, are asked to give. Giving is part of our Christian duty, our sanctification. The need may be bodily, as that of the poor in Jerusalem, or it may be spiritual, for the relief of which missionaries must be sent out. The entire work of Synod comes under this head. As Paul instructed his people, so our members must be directed and

informed. — The motive of all giving, however, must be love of our Lord. We give for the sake of Him who gave Himself for us; because He asks it of us; because it tends to the welfare of His Church and the glorification of His holy name. 1 Cor. 9, 14; Gal. 6, 6. 9. 10; Eccl. 11, 1; Matt. 5, 42; Acts 20, 35; Luke 6, 38; Prov. 3, 9. All this is the "work of the Lord," in which we also should "abound."

Teach us the lesson Thou hast taught,
To feel for those Thy blood hath bought;
That every word and deed and thought
May work a work for Thee. (Hymn 362, 3.)

2.

V. 2: "Let every one of you," etc. The apostle is direct and explicit as to those who should participate. Every member of the congregation in Corinth is addressed: old and young, rich and poor, freemen and slaves. "This admits of no exception. The poorest, if he have anything, is expected, as well as the richest, to contribute something, according to his means." 2 Cor. 9, 7.

Note further the implication in the words "as God hath prospered him." The apostle implies, and rightly so, that not one can say that the Lord has not prospered him in some measure. What we have, whether it be much or little, is from the Giver of every good and perfect gift. If this is true in temporal things, how much more so in spiritual matters. 2 Cor. 8, 9.

An earnest word in place: Every one of our Christians must know that the Lord expects him to participate with his gifts in the work of the Church. Fathers and mothers must set a good example; they can do much to lay a good foundation for the future spiritual life of their children. Every one among us can give and should do so. Young people. Children in school and Sunday-school.

3.

The apostle furnishes interesting items as regards this point.

Bountifully: "as God hath prospered him." 2 Cor. 9, 6. That is the best answer to the question, How much shall I give? 2 Cor. 8, 12; Deut. 16, 17. Examples: widow, Luke 21, 4; churches of Macedonia, 2 Cor. 8, 2; David and Israel, 1 Chron. 29, 14.

Willingly: Rom. 12, 8, "with cheerfulness"; 2 Cor. 9, 7: "cheerful giver"; 1 Tim. 6, 18; Ps. 110, 3. "The beauty and worth of Christian charity are seen in its voluntariness and also its freedom from all parade."

Systematically: "On the first day of the week." V. 2. God is a lover of order. 1 Cor. 14, 40. The lack of systematic giving is one of the chief reasons for the deficit in our treasuries. Many a rich man, because his gifts are not regular, falls short of giving what he should. The same is true of the less favored. *Bengel*: "If a man,

every Lord's Day, has laid by something, he is likely to have collected more than one would have given at once."

Give as regularly as we worship. The demands are constant. The Lord prospers the individual regularly, daily. The time prescribed is the Lord's Day. "Surely no time can be more fitting for the exercise of our grateful charity than this; for it serves to remind us in an especial manner of God's redeeming grace and thus of the love which we ourselves have experienced."

Let us give for the Lord's sake. The love of Christ should constrain us. Let us give gladly, freely, systematically. Thus we shall meet the Lord's own plan, and the treasury of the Lord will not lack.

W. G. P.

Miscellaneous.

Effective Speaking in the Pulpit. — We are inclined to believe that many preachers imagine that to be effective in the pulpit, they must strive to be great orators. We believe, however, that the people in the pews judge the value of a sermon from an altogether different viewpoint. What they desire is not oratory, but spiritual food. The preacher should instruct the people out of the rich treasures of the Word of God and so speak that they can understand him. When the hearers leave the church, they should not say, "We have to-day heard an eloquent speaker," but they should be able to say, "We have to-day learned a lesson from the Word of God for the strengthening of our faith and for improvement in holiness." Not the *preacher*, but the *preachment*, should impress itself upon the minds and the hearts of the hearers. Bombastic language, much beating the air with the hands, and a thundering voice in the pulpit cannot make up for a lack of spiritual thought, nor can such things satisfy the spiritual needs of the hearers. It is one thing to talk eloquently; it is quite another thing to preach a good sermon. And we believe that the members of our Lutheran churches are not easily deceived; they know a good sermon when they hear it.

J. H. C. F.

The Fatherhood-of-God and brotherhood-of-man proponent and protagonist is pleased to quote poetry such as this: —

What care I for caste or creed?
It is the deed, it is the deed.
What for class or what for clan?
It is the man, it is the man.
Heirs of love and joy and woe,
Who is high, and who is low?
Mountain, valley, sky, and sea
Are for all humanity.

What care I for robe or stole?
It is the soul, it is the soul.
What for crown or what for crest?
It is the heart within the breast;
It is the faith, it is the hope,
It is the struggle up the slope.
It is the brain and eye to see
One God and one humanity.

B.

Literatur.

Synodalbericht der 33. regelmäßigen Versammlung der Ev.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, versammelt als 18. Delegatensynode zu St. Louis, Mo., vom 9. bis zum 18. Juni 1926. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Preis: \$1.25.

Die wichtigen und weittragenden Beschlüsse unserer Synode werden hier auf 344 Seiten mit den Eingaben, die sie eingeleitet haben, vollständig dargeboten.
B.

Versicles for the Festival Seasons and General Occasions. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price: 5 cts.; dozen, 40 cts.; 100, 75 cts.

This selection of 90 versicles, arranged according to the cycle of the church-year, with a few special headings, has been edited by Dr. L. Fuerbringer to meet an insistent demand.
B.

My Church and Others. A Summary of the Teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as Distinguished from Those of Other Denominations. By *J. T. Mueller*, Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Seminary. Rudolph Volkening, St. Louis, Mo. Price, 75 cts. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

A "popular guide" the author calls his book, and its whole arrangement, its concise presentation of the matter in hand, and its reference to cults of recent date make it indeed a popular guide. Besides an index the book on 88 pages, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, sets forth, first, the principal doctrines of the true Lutheran Church, with proof-texts printed out and with a refutation of the unscriptural and anti-Scriptural doctrines taught by various cults and denominations. The second part of the book offers brief historical data regarding them. Lodgery and Modernism, with their wicked tenets, are also exposed by the author. Let our people study this book, and they will soon be convinced that some other churches to which they so readily refer are not like the Lutheran Church as they are inclined to assume. Although the writer calls his book a "popular guide," the clergy, we are assured, will find it a very practical help in the performance of their ministerial duties.
B.

Law and Gospel. By *G. C. Koch*, professor at Concordia Seminary, Adelaide, S. A. The Lutheran Publishing Co., Ltd., 238 Rundle St., Adelaide, S. A. Price, \$2.00. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

After the terms Judicial and Ceremonial Law, natural Moral Law, and revealed Moral Law have been thoroughly and Biblically explained, the author sets forth the qualities of the Moral Law as holy, unchangeable, eternal, supreme, final, spiritual, and finally dwells upon the threefold use of the Law as a curb, mirror, and rule. The following chapters bear these headings: The Gospel in General; The Death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God — the Heart of the Gospel; The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead — the Divine Seal of the Gospel; Several Important

Aspects of the Gospel; By Means of the Gospel the Holy Spirit Creates, Sustains, and Increases in the Hearts of Men a New Life. This brief reference to the contents of this book of 297 pages convincingly proves its great worth. The brethren in Australia urged the author to put this matter in print, and the brethren elsewhere will, by a study of this volume, thankfully appreciate the action of the urgers and the excellent work of the author. B.

Shall We Christians of the New Testament Keep the Old Testament Sabbath? A Discussion of the Question in the Light of God's Sacred Word. By *J. T. Mueller*, professor at Concordia Seminary. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. Price, 10 cts.; dozen, \$1.00. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

Pastors who are acquainted with the proselytism practised by the Seventh-day Adventists will see the need of such a tract as Prof. Mueller here offers and will be eager to place it in the hands of their parishioners. We hope to see it widely read and spread. B.

Luthers Deutsche Messe, 1526. Ausgabe mit Noten, bearbeitet von Prof. G. Kawerau und Musikdirektor H. Kawerau. M. Heinsius Nachfolger Eger und Siebers, Leipzig. Preis: 60 Pf.

Wir haben hier einen Sonderabdruck aus „Luthers Werken für das christliche Haus“, von D. Buchwald u. a. herausgegeben. (Vgl. St. Louiser Ausgabe, Bd. X, Kol. 226.) Er empfiehlt sich, weil die Noten darin nach modernem Ton Schlüssel angegeben sind. B.

Der Kampf des Christentums mit dem Heidentum. Von Gerhard Uhlenhorn, D. theol. Siebente, photomechanisch hergestellte Auflage. D. Guntert, Stuttgart. Preis: \$1.75.

Der unvergleichliche Kampf der Kirche Gottes mit den heidnischen Mächten in den ersten Jahrhunderten bis auf die Zeit Julians des Abtrünnigen wird in diesem Werk von 406 Seiten von dem ehrwürdigen D. Uhlhorn in ganz meisterhafter Weise geschildert. Nicht allein die Verfolgungen der einzelnen römischen Kaiser, sondern auch unter anderm die religiösen und sittlichen Zustände in der Heidenwelt werden recht erschöpfend dargestellt. Das Buch wird Prediger und Laien fesseln. Wir teilen gewisse Ansichten des Verfassers über das Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat nicht. B.

Text und Predigt. Von Dr. Paul Wurster, Professor in Tübingen. Calver Vereinsbuchhandlung, Stuttgart. Preis: 75 Cts., kartoniert.

Das Wort Gottes und die Predigt. Von Dr. Karl Fezer, Stadtpfarrer in Tübingen. Derselbe Verlag. Preis: 85 Cts., kartoniert.

„Handreichung für das geistliche Amt“ ist der allgemeine Titel, unter welchem diese beiden Hefte als erstes, resp. zweites, erscheinen. Weitere sollen folgen. Wir glauben, daß es für manchen in unsern Kreisen von besonderem Interesse sein wird, zu lesen, wie man sich in Deutschland mit gewissen praktischen pfarramtlichen Fragen beschäftigt. In diesem Sinne bringen wir obige Werke zur Kenntnis unserer Leser, ohne dabei allen Ausführungen unser Plazet zu geben. B.

The Macmillan Company, New York, has published the following works:—

1. **Finding the Trail of Life.** By *Rufus M. Jones*. Price, \$1.75.

The author, professor of philosophy at Haverford College, is known for his strikingly beautiful style. In the present book he gives an account of his experiences and sentiments during the years of boyhood and adolescence. The pages, one is almost inclined to say hyperbolically, carry the fragrance of the flowers which the little boy gathered in the Maine forest, where he was brought up. Since Mr. Jones is a Quaker, his theology cannot receive our endorsement.

2. **The First Age of Christianity.** By *Ernest F. Scott*. Price, \$1.50.

Professor Scott of Union Seminary is one of the prominent New Testament scholars of the day. His theological position, as is evident from his connection with Union Seminary, is that of a Liberal. The book under consideration is divided into six sections, the titles being, respectively: 1) The Historical Background; 2) The Gospel Record; 3) The Life of Jesus; 4) The Teaching of Jesus; 5) The Primitive Church; 6) The Development of New Testament Thought. The book is not intended to be a technical work for specialists, but a popular presentation of what higher critics consider more or less assured results in this field. Any one who has to acquaint himself with the present status of critical thought and investigation will find that this book can render him valuable services. It is impossible here to launch into detailed criticism. One is curious to know, to mention but one point, what Dr. Scott has to say about the resurrection of Jesus. Here his language is characteristically vague. He says, p. 88: "Our belief in the resurrection must rest on the positive fact that the disciples had some experience which convinced them that Jesus was still alive. For that part, the resurrection ought not to be taken simply as a miraculous fact standing by itself; its whole significance lies in the divine life which led up to it and from which it cannot be separated. Jesus Himself is the real proof of the resurrection. The more we ponder our record of Him, the more we realize the wonder of His personality, the more certain will it be to us that He died to live forever." Whether Dr. Scott believes that Christ's body was restored to life, or whether he holds, as many Modernists do, that merely our Lord's spirit appeared to His disciples after His death and burial, is not indicated.

A.

Convention Year-Book of the Thirty-Fourth International Convention of the Walther League, Baltimore, Md., July 11—15, 1926.
Price, \$1.00.

A record of all minutes, committee reports, addresses, and programs is here submitted, as complete as ever could be expected. The addresses alone are worth the price of the book of 126 pages.

B.

Announcement or Invitation Card, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. Price: 5 cts.; dozen, 48 cts.; 100, \$1.00.

A suitable card of a very good quality of paper is here offered for the purposes designated. It contains in the upper left-hand corner an imprint of Luther's coat of arms. The cost of the printed matter on the card depends upon the amount and kind of copy submitted.

B.